

# *Vermont Mentors!*

## *Matching Funds for Mentoring*

*Six Month Report to  
The Agency of Human Services*

### **Introduction**

---

Spurred by the appropriation of \$250,000 in funds for mentoring in May 2006, The Agency of Human Services and The Permanent Fund for the Well-Being of Vermont Children agreed to enter into an innovative public-private partnership to not only conduct grantmaking, but to also advance our shared goals of increasing the quantity and quality of mentor matches throughout the state of Vermont.

Since then, The Agency of Human Services (AHS), represented by Scott Johnson, Deputy Commissioner for Field Services, and The Permanent Fund for the Well-Being of Vermont Children, represented by Christine Zachai, Executive Director, have worked together closely to develop the goals of the grant round, generate awareness of the funding opportunity, research total funding available to mentoring programs in the state, plan and execute a kick-off for National Mentoring Month, and develop strategies to advance the mentoring movement. It has been an honor for The Permanent Fund to collaborate with AHS.

Highlights of the grantmaking to date include:

- 25 Total grants awarded
- Average grant size of \$7,096
- Grants will create 358 net new matches serving 358 additional young people
- Grantees will host 1,763 total matches by the end of the grant periods
- Vermont Mentors! grants will have increased total matches and total children served by 25%
- \$177,389 has been granted to date
- \$88,695 in private funds will be raised to match taxpayer dollars

Most importantly, our original goal of using the \$250,000 in Vermont Mentors! funds to create 250 new mentor matches has been exceeded by 43% . . . which translates to 358 young people being matched with caring adults across the state.

## **Grantmaking Activities to Date**

---

*July – August 2006*

### **Grant Contract:**

Johnson and Zachai developed the language of the grant contract, and, therefore, the shared goals for the partnership. The primary goal was to use the grant funds to facilitate the development of 250 net, new mentor matches. In summary, the specific language of the contract also called for:

- The Permanent Fund to administer the grant round, and to ensure that grantees complied with the requirements of the state contract.
- Grant funds to be distributed with several factors in mind:
  - Population and poverty data for children and youth
  - Utilization of the Elements of Best Practice as outlined by the National Mentoring Partnership
  - A private match of 50 cents to each grant dollar
  - Prioritization of existing mentoring programs rather than starting up new programs
- The Permanent Fund passed grant funds through to Mobius and Mentor Connector; two regional mentor networks that would handle grantmaking in Chittenden and Rutland County respectively.
- The flexibility to apply up to \$25,000 of the grant funds to support mentoring for children of incarcerated mothers.
- The Permanent Fund to use up to \$5,000 to support fundraising workshops for grantees.
- AHS and The Permanent Fund to collaborate to develop a map of public and private resources dedicated to mentoring in the state.
- AHS and The Permanent Fund to work together to also determine the status of the Vermont Mentoring Partnership, and strategize on techniques to promote mentoring statewide.
- The Permanent Fund would generate awareness of the grant rounds, provide regular updates to AHS, and ensure that grantees follow reporting procedures.

### **Fund Distribution:**

Johnson and Zachai worked together to develop a system to take advantage of the expertise of the existing regional networks by distributing pass-through funds to Mobius and Mentor Connector in Chittenden and Rutland Counties, respectively, while also reserving funds for grantmaking throughout the rest of the state. Mobius and Mentor Connector passed through 100% of these funds to mentoring programs. The final allocation, using AHS and US Census data, is shown in the table below.

County/AHS District	% of State's Population aged 5-17	Allocation of Funds by Pop. Aged 5-17	% of Children in District living in poverty	% of VT Children Age 5-17 Living in Poverty in this District	Dividing Mentoring Funds by % of Children in Poverty	Averaging allocation by no of children and % in poverty	Final Allocation
Vermont	100%	\$248,500	11.9%	100%		\$248,500	\$250,000
Rutland Co.	10%	\$24,850	13%	11%	\$26,260	\$27,425	\$28,000
Chittenden Co.	24%	\$58,582	8%	16%	\$38,560	\$49,291	\$50,000
Vermont, Excluding Chittenden & Rutland Co.'s	67%	\$165,068				\$171,784	\$170,500

### Grantmaking Criteria:

Zachai developed the details of the grantmaking criteria, guidelines and application. During the development of these materials, she solicited feedback from the Executive Directors of Mobius and Mentor Connector. The final guidelines (attachments, section 2) stated:

*Vermont Mentors! is seeking to fund:*

- *Existing*, one to one, adult-to-child mentoring programs in Vermont. We are not able to support the start-up of new programs with these funds. College students are considered adults.
- *Net new* adult-to-child mentoring matches. We want to fund mentoring programs who commit to growing the total number of matches.
- *Ambitious fundraisers!*
  - Vermont Mentors! is a 2:1 matching grant program. We are asking you to commit to raising 50 cents of private (non-government) funds for each Vermont Mentors! grant dollar you receive.
  - We want to fund mentoring programs that are interested in *improving their fundraising skills!* As a benefit for grantees, we will ask each program to attend a mandatory fundraising workshop taught by national fundraising consultant Andy Robinson.

*Vermont Mentors! cannot fund:*

- Programs that are *not* adult-to-child mentoring (i.e., no peer mentoring, group mentoring, e- mentoring, etc.)
- Start up of *new* mentoring programs
- *Existing* mentoring matches

Applicants also filled out a cover sheet (attachments, section 2) that asked them to set a goal for net, new mentors that would be recruited with a Vermont Mentors! grant, and gathered information on current matches and the program's revenue model. Applicants also had to indicate whether they were currently following each of the National Mentoring Partnership's

Elements of Best Practice, and to include a reason if they were *not* following a particular best practice.

### **Outreach:**

Outreach began in August and continued into September. Entities that received the guidelines (and were encouraged to share them) include but are not limited to:

#### *Mentoring organizations, such as:*

- Mentoring programs across the state
- Mobius
- Mentor Connector
- Lamoille Valley Mentoring Partnership

#### *State gov't contacts, such as:*

- AHS Field Directors
- Regional Partnerships
- Selected AHS staff
- Vermont Commission on Women

#### *Other private funders, such as:*

- United Ways
- Children's Trust Fund
- Tarrant Foundation
- Henderson Foundation
- Turrell Foundation
- Vermont Community Foundation
- Vermont Women's Fund

#### *Human service non-profits, such as:*

- Building Bright Futures

- Community Actions across the state
- Association of Youth Centers
- Parent/Child and Family Centers
- Washington County Youth Service Bureau
- Northeast Kingdom Youth Services
- Youth Services of Windham County
- United Counseling Service
- Vermont Children's Forum
- Vermont Children's Aid Society

#### *Non-Profit consultants & fundraisers, such as:*

- Debby Bergh
- Lisa Cashdan
- Sonny Cloward
- Christine Graham
- Marilyn Neagley
- Caleb Rick
- Andy Robinson

Additionally, the guidelines were posted on the Vermont Community Foundation website, and shared with selected state legislators.

*September – October 2006*

### **Application Deadline:**

Applications were due on September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2006. A total of 25 applications were received. Christine Zachai conducted site visits in September and October with each of the 9 applicants around the state handled by the Permanent Fund. Mobius and Mentor Connector received 16 applications total, and Zachai provided oversight for their grantmaking processes. AHS Field Directors were asked for their insight on the applications from their district whenever possible.

*November 2006*

**Final Decision Making:**

Final grantmaking decisions were made in November. The Permanent Fund, Mentor Connector, and Mobius each convened committees composed of the Executive Director, Board Members, and external volunteers to review applications and make recommendations. The Permanent Fund's "Grants Committee Plan" is included as a sample of this process (attachments, section 3). All recommendations were submitted to the Board of Directors of the Permanent Fund for final approval in November.

**Declines:**

The reasons for declined applications were carefully documented. Some applicants were seeking funding for a new mentoring program rather than an existing mentoring program. Other applicants could not prove their capacity to manage a Vermont Mentors! grant and/or recruit the necessary new mentors. The Executive Directors made personal phone calls to each declined applicant to explain the reason for the decline, and followed each phone call with a letter.

**Funded Applications:**

Successful applicants were notified by phone promptly. Zachai developed a packet of paperwork (attachments, section 3) that each successful applicant received, including the state contract and reporting requirements. Applicants had to return a signed contract, a signed award letter, and proof of insurance. The Permanent Fund, Mobius and Mentor Connector issued checks once those materials were received.

**First Round Grantmaking Results:**

The first round of grantmaking resulted in 21 awards totaling \$139,901. The 21 grantees committed to recruiting a total of 313 net new matches, which would increase their combined mentor matches by 20.5%. Grantees also committed to raising \$68,700 in private funds to match their Vermont Mentors! grants.

**Second Round of Grantmaking:**

Even before we conducted final grantmaking in November, it was clear that we would have additional funds to grant. We issued the RFP for the second round of grantmaking in the first week of November. The guidelines remained the same, and applicants who applied in the first round were ineligible to apply in the second round.

**Second Round Outreach:**

In addition to the original list of recipients listed above, Zachai also sent guidelines to numerous new entities. Since so many of the email addresses listed on the Vermont Mentoring Partnership website were inaccurate, Zachai snail mailed guidelines with a special cover page to all the organizations listed on the website who had not applied in the first round. In an effort to reach school-based programs, Zachai sent guidelines to superintendent associations, and sought out specific schools in regions that were under-represented in the first round. Finally, the Lamoille Valley Mentoring Partnership was specifically solicited for applications from their members since no applications had been received from Lamoille County in the first round.

*December 2006 – January 2007*

**Final 2<sup>nd</sup> Round Decision Making:**

The deadline for the second round was December 15<sup>th</sup>. Six applications were received. The Permanent Fund used the same grantmaking process articulated earlier, and made final decisions in January. Unfortunately, there were no applications received in the second round from Lamoille County.

**Second Round Grantmaking Results:**

The second round of grantmaking resulted in 4 awards totaling \$37,488. The 4 grantees committed to recruiting a total of 45 net new matches. Grantees also committed to raising \$18,744 in private funds to match their Vermont Mentors! grants. Please see below for combined round 1 & 2 grantmaking statistics. These grants will receive final approval from the Permanent Fund Board on Feb. 17.

**Grantmaking Statistics as of February 2007**

---

- 25 Total grants have been awarded
- Average grant size is \$7,096
- The grants will create 358 net new matches serving 358 additional young people.
- The grantees will host 1,763 total matches by the end of the grant periods.
- Vermont Mentors! grants will have increased total matches and total children served by 25%.
- \$177,389 has been granted to date
- \$88,695 in private funds will be raised to match taxpayer dollars.

Most importantly, our original goal of using the \$250,000 in Vermont Mentors! funds to create 250 new mentor matches has been exceeded by 43% . . . which translates to 358 young people being matched with caring adults across the state. A complete list of grants and a current accounting is included in the attachments (section 4).

**Fundraising Workshops**

---

Fundraising workshops with Andy Robinson, a nationally known grassroots fundraising trainer, will be held on February 14<sup>th</sup> in Bellows Falls, and February 15<sup>th</sup> in Montpelier. The agenda (attachments, section 6)) is focused on fundraising from one's local community – primarily individuals, but also service clubs, local businesses, etc. Our goal is to inspire mentoring programs to incorporate sustainable fundraising practices into the outreach they are already doing in their communities. Fifty-eight people have RSVP'ed, including 8 board members/volunteers/mentors. Attendees will be asked to complete an evaluation of the workshop.

## **Other Collaborative Activities**

---

### *Vermont Mentoring Partnership*

Johnson and Zachai shared the goal of determining the status of the Vermont Mentoring Partnership, and strategizing on the development of statewide resources for mentoring programs. The Vermont Mentoring Partnership (VMP) was a project of the Business Education Partnership, which was closely associated with the Vermont Chamber of Commerce. Several phone calls to the Chamber yielded the following results:

- The VMP existed for 3 years, which was the life of the federal grant that funded its work. It was last active at least 2 years ago.
- At nearly the same time, the Director of the VMP left the state and the federal grant ran out. No others funds were raised to continue the work.
- Chamber staff update the website “when they have time,” but readily admit that the website is out of date.
- When the VMP was active, it fulfilled numerous functions for mentoring programs in the state:
  - Publicity, including a kick-off in January for National Mentoring Month
  - Central clearing house for potential mentors, with a maintained website and a 800 phone number
  - Annual conference for mentoring program staff, mentors and grantees
  - Monthly statewide networking meetings
  - Support for regional networks of mentoring programs
  - Technical support

Local mentoring programs are unanimous in their regret that the VMP is no longer active, and they clearly miss the statewide network (even more so for programs that are not part of regional networks). Zachai has used her site visits and other contacts with mentoring programs to poll them on what sort of resources they need to increase the quality and quantity of their mentor matches. The most highly desired resources cited to date are:

1. Publicity
2. Central clearing house
3. Annual conference

After attempts to convene a meeting with the Chamber to discuss the VMP, we learned that the Chamber would be issuing an RFP in February for the VMP. The Permanent Fund is continuing to facilitate conversations with mentoring programs to determine what resources are most needed, and the best structure to deliver those resources to them.

### *National Mentoring Month Kick-Off*

#### **Planning and Recruitment:**

An excellent example of the AHS/Permanent Fund collaboration is the jointly coordinated National Mentoring Month kick-off. We developed the idea in December, and Heidi Tringe of AHS quickly secured time during the Governor’s January 11<sup>th</sup> press conference. Zachai wrote speaking points for the Governor, Tringe developed a press release, and Zachai recruited mentoring program staff, board members and matches (attachments, section 5). A dozen mentoring program staff and board members attended from Chittenden, Washington, Rutland, and Windsor Counties. Thirteen mentors and mentees attended, including two very articulate mentees who spoke positively about their experience.

**Publicity:**

The kick-off generated press in the Times Argus, Burlington Free Press, Vermont Standard and WCAX (attachments, section 5). Mentoring programs were very grateful that AHS and the Permanent Fund worked together to coordinate the kick-off.

*Mentoring Resource Mapping*

Johnson and Zachai have collaborated to compile a list (attachments, section 7) of the funding available to mentoring programs from private foundations and government sources. Thirty-two grants spanning the past two years and totaling \$557,750 have been assembled, and Zachai will continue to do additional analysis to determine which mentoring programs tend to successfully tap into these funding sources and which are not, whether there are geographic areas that are neglected, etc. Johnson and Zachai anticipate strategizing on funding sources for mentoring, and perhaps convening these funders.

**Looking Forward**

---

Johnson and Zachai are continuing conversations on how to best benefit the mentoring movement with the remaining Vermont Mentors! funds (attachments, section 4). Some concepts include:

- Development of a statewide database of mentoring programs
- Statewide mentoring conference
- Mini-grant round targeted to the special needs of mentoring programs within schools

A final strategy should be developed by March 2007.